

4

THE DIGNITIE OF the Scripture together with

The Indignity which the vnthankfull world
offereth therunto.

In three sermons vpon Hose. 8. 12. By Samuel Hieron.

Psal. 119. v. 129.

Thy testimonies are wonderfull.

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Printed by IOHN LEGAT
Printer to the Vniuersitie of Cambridge. 1607.

And are to be sold at the signe of the Crowne in Pauls
Church-yard by Simon VVaterdon.

THE

DICTIONARY OF

the Sciences together with

the Biography which the History of the
Institutions

and the Institutions of the State

By J. G. L. L.

The Dictionary is intended to



Edited by JOHN LEIGHTON

Printed by the University of Cambridge

And sold by the University of Cambridge

TO THE RIGHT WOR- SHIPFULL AND MY VERY REVE-

rend freind M. Doctor Goad, Provost of the
Kings Colledge in Cambridge.



When I remember the times and furtherances
of my education, and consider with my selfe by
whose free choise, I was preferred into that
worthy societie (the head-ship whereof your
worship hath so many yeares enjoyed) I cannot
but say to you as Hierome did to a freind of
his, Tibi & quod possū debeo, & quod non

Hiero. Sophron.

possum: I am indebted to you both to the utmost extent of my a-
bility, and in much more then I can performe. Give me leaue there-
fore (I beseech you) not as by way of requitall (for I will not so
much either under-value your favour, or abridge my debt) but as
by way of acknowledgement (leaving this, as it were a bill of my
hand what I haue receiued, and how deeply I am engaged) to pre-
sent you with these three sermons. They are of the Dignitie of the
scripture, and therefore (their subiect considered) are not unworthy
your patronage, being so antient and so indicions a professor of
Theologic. The manner of handling, because, as it is liable to cen-
sure in this taxing age, so it may perhaps through my want either
of skill or care deserue reproofe, therefore I doe submit it wholly to
your worships triall, that after, it may either step further into pub-
like view, or els stop where it is, according as you shall please to dis-
pose. How soeuer it be, albeit I must confesse, that I should much re-
ioyce in your approouing furtherance, yet at the least I shall herein
find contentment, that I haue endenoured out of my unfained sen-
siblenes of your worships respectiue kindnesse, to make the world a
witnes of my thankfullnes. And so in the fulnes of my desire,
that he in whom all Fulnes dwelleth may so replenish you with
spirituall blessings in heauenly things, that like the Trees
planted in the house of the Lord, you may still euen in your
Age bring forth fruit, and be fatte & flourishing, I humbly
take my leaue. Modbury in Denonshire this 2. of Iuly. 1607.

Col. 1. 9.

Eph. 3.

Pla. 92. 13. 14.

Your worships euer in
the Lord, Samuell Hieron.

Holca. 8. 12.

*I haue written to them the great things
of my law, but they were counted as a
strange thing.*

The first Sermon.

THis verse is as it were the lords com-
plainte touching the wretched care-
lesnes of the sonnes of men, who in-
loying the greatest benefite, viz. the
blessed liberty of this word, yet non-
withstanding utterly neglect it, and
esteem it as a thing not worthy the
regarding. That I may both for your
profite, and myne owne helpe proceed in handling of it
with the better order, I will diuide it into two parts; the
first may be not vnfitly called Gods bounty, *I haue written
to them the great things of my law*; the second may be termed
mans impiety, *but they were counted as a strange thing*. God
hath vouchsafed the free vse of his word; what greater
bounty? Men passe by it as a thing not worth the looking
to, what greater impiety? of these two points in order.

I haue &c. In the first part wee haue two things to con-
sider, first the commendation of gods word; secondly the
mercy of god in vouchsafeing it vnto vs: The word of god
is commended vnto vs in these termes; *The great things of
the law*; The word which is out of the *Hab.* translated heere
(*great*) signifieth, *honorable, or precious, or ample, and plentiful*;
so that the word of God is comended heere, by two things,
1. the plenty, and abundance, and largenes of matter that is
in it; 2. the price, and excellency, and worth of the matter.
I wil speak of both seuerally: & I pray you let vs wel obserue
them, that the word of God may grow into greater credit
with vs then it is.

And

Touch

TO THE RIGHT WOR.

SHIRVALL AND MY VERY BRAVE.

Read and M. Doctor Gard, Provost of the

Keble College in Cambridge.

It is to be considered that the present and future
of our country is much concerned in the
choice of a Bishop. The present Bishop of
Exeter is a man of great learning and piety
and his successor should be a man of like
qualities. I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
J. Keble

ERRATA.

3 DE60

Pag. 2. l. 10. for reserved, read referred. p. 3. l. 18. with with sickness.
p. 4. l. 15. after needfull matter, put in these words viz. not revealed
in it, hath added to it a packe and rable of unwritten traditions,
concerning which it reacheth, that they are to be received & embraced
with the same affection, with the like zeale, with the same respect,
as we doe p. 4. l. 37. after all the, read the first words of the 5. p.
viz. authors of them &c. there be other smal faults escaped which I
would desire the gentle reader to amend as he read.

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1086

2. Tim 3. 16.

Ioh 20. 31.

Ezek 20. 11.

Luk 16. 31.

2. Pet 1. 31.

Touching the largenes and amplexes of the word of god, I set down this point; *That all necessary points either touching faith or manners, are abundantly contayned, and layed forth in the scriptures;* for prooffe whereof, that one saying of the Apostle is sufficient; *The whole scripture is giuen by inspiration of God, and is profitable, to teach, to imbrooue, to correct, and to instruct in righteousness:* now what spiritual occasion can there be deuised, which is not here mentioned? what matter is there in the whole body of religion, but it may well be referred to one of these heads; either *teaching, imbroouing, correcting, or instructing?* so that the word of God being sufficient to all these, is not wanting in any necessary matter whatsoeuer. *These things* (saith Sainte Iohn) *are written, that yee might haue life through his name;* a plaine testimony that there is inough left written in the bible, for the begetting of faith, and for the guiding of the soule of euery faithfull beleuer vnto life eternall. *I gaue them my statutes* (saith God) *I declared my iudgements vnto them, which if a man doe he shall liue:* the taking of that course which is proscribed to vs in the word, is all sufficient to saluation. *They haue Moses & the Prophets* saith Abraham to the rich glutton in hell, meaning that then they want no needfull instruction, for the bringing of them by repentance vnto life. Infinite are the places of scripture to this end, shewing the absolutenesse of that doctrine, which is contained in the written word, vrging vs to rest our selues satisfied with that which is reuealed, condemning al the inuentions and traditions of man that are added therunto. And seeing it is a sure thing that the bookes of holy scripture, are penned by the speciall guidance of gods spirit, as Sainte Peter affirmeth; it must needs follow that if there be any needfull matter omitted in them, it came to passe, ether because they which wrot, did not know it, or because, knowing it they would not reueale it, or because being willing to reueale it, they forgot it, or else because though they forgot it not, yet they knew not how, and in what manner to performe it. Now whichsoeuer of all these wee shall thinke, wee shall caste a very greate indignity and disgrace, not simply vpon the pen-men of the scripture, but vpon the spirit of God, by whose

whose speciall direction, they wrote euery word and title, and vpon whome to lay any imputation, ether of weakenes or vnwillingnes to performe any thinge for the good of Godes Church, were no lesse then blasphemie. Adde hereto for the better opening of this point, that looke what is the spirituall necessitie of a christian vpon any occasion, either of his calling, or of his degree and proceeding and estate in his profession, the word of God is not wanting to giue him fulnes of direction. If he be a Magistrate, it teacheth him how to gouerne, if a Mynister, it informeth him how to teach, if a master of a family, it instructeth him for the particular duties of his place, whether he be a husband, or a father, or a master, or son, or seruant, it sheweth him in euery of these, how to demean himselfe as becomes a christian: It giues him direction for his apparrell, his speach, his diet, his company, his disports, his labour, his buying and selling, yea and for his very sleepe, and for those things which may be thought most arbitrary and indifferent. It is vnpossible for him to deuise any thing, touching which he may not fetch a needfull direction from the scripture. Againe, conceue of him how you will in regard of the seuerall degrees of Christianity, the word of God is still his counsellor: if he be ignorant, there be plaine principles of religion, as milke to feed him; if he be better grounded, there be points of greater depth to imploy him; if there be any case of conscience that troubles him, any scruple that disquiets him, there is vnfallible certainty to resolue him; if he be afflicted either in body sicknesse, or in goods with losses, or in good name with vnderferued reproches, or in mind with the buffering of Sathan, and his owne corruption; there is plenty of comfort to relecue him, there is store of rules to informe him, how to profit by his tryalls: if he be zealous, there is matter to encourage him; if cold and falling backe; there is meanes to quicken him: if he be stubborn and obstinate, there is iudgment to humble him: if he be broken hearted, there is a salve to restore him: if he be turned out of the way by some great sinne, there is as it were a bridle to stop him: whatsoeuer his occasion be, how euer his soule is affected, in what perplexitie soeuer he

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is, whether it be comfort or counsell, or resolution, or reproofe, or instruction that he needs; the word of God is a plentifull storehouse and meets to the full which euery spirituall necessitie, so then this is my reason, why the law of God, the word of God, is called *greate*, or *large* because looke of what extent & widenes our spirituall wants are, of the same are those holy directions which the Lord hath reuealed in his word. *I haue seene (saith David) an end of all perfection, but thy law is exceeding large.* Let vs now make vse of this doctrine. The vse of this pointe touching the largnes and aimplenes of the word of God, extending and stretching it selfe to all the spirituall occasions of all Gods people, is first to ouerthrow the iudgment and practise of the Church of Roome, which, as though there were some defecte in the scripture, or some needfull matter receiue the writtē word it selfe, and must be beleueed also as profitable and necessary to saluation. Now this opinion and course is plaine against this place of scripture, in which the word of God is graced with this title, *greate*, or *plentifull*, or *large*, if there be any thing left out of it, which is necessary for the information of any mans soule vnto life eternall, sure it hath not deserued that honorable name wherewith it is stiled: I meane, if a Christian man either for the setting of his soule in a matter of faith, or the directing of his course in a matter of conuersation, should finde that scantinesse and barrennesse in the scripture, that he should be faine to goe seeke direction elsewhere: or if there were no want in the word of God, why should he be so heavily cursed that pur- ought vnto it? whereas if there be any point needful to saluation, which is not mentioned in it, there must of necessity be some addition. And therefore wee must for euer separate our selues from that Church, which (when God hath written his word as a perfect direction, full and entire in euery respect) thrusts vpon vs the inventions of man, daring also to make them in authoritie equall to the scriptures.

This is the first vse, euen to teach vs heartily and vnfainedly to detest, all additions to the word of God, and al the not reuealed in it, hath added to it a pack and rable of vnwritten traditions, concerning which it teacheth, that they are to be receiued and embraced with the same affection, with the like zeale; with the same respect, as wee doe

authors of them whatsoever: and yet with this caution, that wee must beware that wee be not deceiued in the right vnderstanding of that which we call an Addition to the scripture: wee must not thinke as some doe, that this ordinance of God which wee call preaching, is an adding to the scripture; it being a course which God in his wisdom hath appointed for the gathering of his Church, and for the opening and discovering vnto the sonnes of men, the hid treasure: But that is called an Addition to the word of God, which being commended vnto men as a matter of religion cannot be iustified, nor warranted, nor made good by the written word, but is grounded onely either vpon carnall reason and conceipt, or vpon the will of him that vrgeth it; All and euery such addition wee must take heede of, and remember what the Apostle saith: *If any man deliuer any other* (meaning any other for substance, though in wordes and manner of deliuey it may differ) *though he were an Angel,* Gal. 1. 8. *&c. let him be accursed.*

2. The second vse of this pointe is to condemne the common neglect, and vniuersall contempte of the precepts and rules of holie scripture: what occasion soeuer wee haue the word of God is still at hand to counsell vs, and it is such a direction, as cannot deceiue vs, yet in the most of our cases and spirituall needes, wee will seeke to any thinge rather then to the scripture. In the worship of god wee doe much more esteeme our owne humors and the traditions of our fathers, then the prescription of the word.

In matters of conuersation, wee preferre the examples & guises of the times, the course & practise of the multitude, before the principles of gods spirit: nay wee thinke it too much precisenesse, and a thing very ridiculous and childish, to tie a mans selfe so strait, as not willingly to swarue fro the direction, and warrant of the scriptures. If wee be sick, wee will goe first to carnall meanes, & last to the scripture: if wee be greiued in mind and touched in conscience, wee will looke for comfort any where, before we will seeke it in the scripture: if wee be wronged and iniured in the world, wee will runne after the eggings on of our owne corrupt heart, to be our owne auengers, before wee will aske coun-

sell of the scripture. As in these few, so almost in all other things, any rules please vs better then the rules of the scripture. In apparrell wee are led by the fashion, in meat and drinke by our sensuall appetite; in recreation by companie or by our owne inordinate affections; in dealings with men, by our profit; in getting riches, by our vnvariable desires; these be our rules: the precepts of the word of God either wee doe not know, or we doe not esteeme them, or wee thinke it a burden, and a kind of restraint to be tied to obserue them. Thus we are like vnto those of whome God complaines by Ieremie, *They haue forsaken me* (saith he) *the fountaine of liuing waters, & digge themselves pittes, euen broken pits that can hold no water,* so wee let goe the best aduise which cannot erre, and deuise rules and precepts to our selues, which must needes deceiue vs. To reforme this common euill, let vs remember what we haue heard, viz. that God hath furnished his word with varietie of directions, the precepts of it are of equall largenes to our spirituall occasions: *as many as walke according to this rule, peace shall be vpon them* (saith the Apostle: but to euery other course whatsoever it be; wee may boldly apply the saying of Salomon: *There is a way that seemeth right vnto a man, but the issues thereof are the waies of death.* And thus much of the commendation giuen to the law of God, it is large in matter, and abounding with varietie of doctrine.

Now followeth to speake of the next thing by which it commended; *It is pretious, the value and price* of the matter, doth equall the largenes and varietie of it. The pretiousnesse and excellencie may many waies be made knowne vnto vs; first by the author of it, which is God, for which cause it is so often called the *worde of God: the law of God: the counsell of God: the oracles of God.* The whole scripture was giuen (saith Paul) *by inspiration of God: And it came* (saith Saint Peter) *not by the will of man, but of the holy Ghost: and I haue written it* (saith he) heere in my text. So that it is no idle tale deuised as Atheists say by the witte of man to keepe the vulgar in subiection; but it is the very mind of God, & the very expresse patterne of that truth, which is originally in the fountaine of al truth, which is the *lord:* secōdly by the matter of it; the matter of whole

Ier. 2. 13.

Gal. 6. 16.
Pro. 14. 12.

I
1. Pet. 1. 25.
Ps. 1. 2.
Aq. 20. 37.
Rom. 1. 2.
2. Tim. 3. 16.
2 Pet. 1. 21.

Scripture is in a word, that great mystery of godlines of which the Apostle speaketh, *God manifested in the flesh &c. A glorious mystery: A hid mystery which none of the princes of this world could know*; A mystery which no man by the witte of man is euer able to conceiue; A myserie which the Angells in heauen do admire, and the Deuills in hell doe tremble at: A misterie which the Atheists in their mouthes doe scoffe at, but euen at the same time in their hearts doe quake to consider. This is the matter of the scripture, *Jesus Christ, yesterday, to day, the same for euer*: he is the yea, and the amen of all the promises, the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the first, and the last, the pith and marrow of the whole: thirdly by the stile of it; *Fullnesse of maiestie in simplicitie of words*, the like temper no where else to be found in any humane writer whatsoeuer. I know that in sundry parcels of the scripture, there are to be scene many more then steppes or prints of eloquence, which the wisdome of God did to make vs know, that he could if it had pleased him, haue fretted (as it were) the whole volume of the booke with the excellencie of words; yet generally it is so carried, in such a low phrase of speache, which yet doth not saour of any earthly mould, but makes a man euen as it were in despite of himselfe to admire it *Thy testimonies are wonderfull* (saith David) yet in the next verse he saith, *the entrance into them sheweth light, & giveth vnderstanding*: so that there is a depth of misterie in plaines of words. Fourthly, the end of it; the end of the scripture is not to please idle humors with variety of delightfull matters, nether to exercise busy wits with subtilty of questions, nor to be as a matter of storie only to acquaint men with the course of times, nor to furnish me with ability to discourse; the word of God aimes at none of these ends, (which yet notwithstanding are the cheife scope, and euen the happinesse of the most Authors,) but it driues at this one point, *to make a man wise vnto saluation. To shew the path of life; To guide our feete into the way of peace.* we may read in the great booke of the creatures (as I may so call it,) *the invisible things of god, his eternall power & godhead*; yet the knowledge of God gotten there is of no power, but only to make vs inexcusable. And therefore David haueing spoken of the

2
1. Tim. 3. 16.
Col. 1. 27.
1. Cor. 2. 8.

1091

Heb. 13. 8.
2. Cor. 1. 20.
Reuel. 1. 12.

3

Plal. 119. 120.

4

2. Tim. 3. 15.
Plal. 16. 11.
Luk. 1. 79
Roma. 1. 20

1092

Psal. 19.

Ver. 7.

Psal. 93.

Ioh. 4. 23.

Exod. 30. 18.

Ver. 30.

maiesty of God which appeareth euen in the creation of things, comes at last, to this, *The law of the lord is perfect conuerting the soule*, to shew, that without the word of God, though man might gaine knowledge enough to condemne him, yet he could get none to saue him. And so many other places hauing declared the testimonies of the power of God which are to be scene euen in the very waues of the sea, at last he concludes the psalme, *O lord thy testimonies are very sure*, meaning that there is no certaine and comfortable knowledge of God to be gotten, but only from thence, And for the same cause Christ told the woman of Samaria, *that they worshipped they knew not what*; and that the true worship was only among the Iewes, because they only had the scriptures. Now then looke how farre saluation, life eternall, euerlasting happinesse, doe exceed all other things, by so much is the doctrine of the scripture of greater price, then all other doctrines, then all other writings whatsoeuer. Thus you see the price and excellency of the word of God; *pretious* for the author, the God of truth; *pretious* for the matter, the glorious mystery of Christ; *pretious* for the frame and forme, plainnes of stile mixed with maiesty: *pretious for the end*, to make vs wise vnto saluation. Let vs indeauour now to make the best vse of this doctrine.

1. The first vse of it, is to admoñish euery minister, (who by his office and calling is to handle the word of God) to doo it with reuerence and humility, in as much as it is a thing of that exceeding price, and therefore a woe shalbe vnto him whosoever, that shall rashly, and vnadvisedly, and vnreuerently dispence it. Wee shall read, that among other the holy things which God ordayned to be made in the ancient tabernacle he appointed a lauer of *brasse*, in which Aaron and his sonnes should wash their hands and their feete, so often as they went into the tabernacle, or did goe vnto the altar to minister; which outward washing comanded to the preists (and that with such a strait penalty, that they must do it *lest they dye*,) serueth to teach all those that succeed them in the seruice of God, in the Church, to take heed how they do vnholily and without due preparing, and study, and an humble seeking of the lord, aduenture to meddle

dle with a thing of that heavenly price, as the word of God is. *If any man speake, let him speake as the words of God* (saith Saint Peter.

2. Secondly it is an admonition also to all that come to heare, to *take heed* (as Solomon saith) *to their feete before they come into the house of God.* I may say to you touching the word of God, as Christ saied to the people touching *Iohn baptist*, *what went ye out* (saith he) *into the wildernesse to see?* so what is it that you come from your houses to the Church to be partakers of? is it an idle song, or an old wiues tale, or a foolish history, or a friuolous enterlude to be laughed at? or what is it that you come for? is it not the word of God? if you say it is, know you not of what price it is, or doe you consider from whom it comes, of whom it treats, and to what end it aymes? if you doe, how do you dare to come vnto it with vnprepared, vnreformed, vn sanctified hearts? how is it that we make no more account of hearing it, then of any other vaine imployment? Alas who is there amongst vs, but generally he comes with as great preparation to his worke, or to his market, or to his play, as he doth to the grauest exercises of the most pretious word of God? nay our preparation vsually is greater vnto things of that nature, then to this: for whiles we are setting our selues to these occasions, we will busy our tongues, and our thoughts, about the things pertaining to them; but when we com to the word, we neuer seeke to disburthen our thoughts of all other matters; that we might be the more free to entertaine a thing of that exceeding price: Remēber what god saied to Moses when he appeared vnto him; when Moses was comming towards the place, God called vnto him; *put off thy shoes, &c.* meaning by that ceremony to strike a kind of awfull reuerence into Moses, when as he was now to come & stand before God: thereby also teaching vs, that when we come to the exercises of Gods worshippe, (among which the vse of the word is the principal) wee must labour (as the Apostie saith) *to cast away euery thing that presseth downe*, & to ease our selues from euery vncleane, unhallowed, worldly or needlesse thought, from euery vnrueerent motion, which may be a clogge, or hinderance vnto vs, in the saieing hearing of Gods word.

1. Pet. 4. 11.

Eccles. 4. 17.

Math. 11. 9.

Exod. 3. 5.

Heb. 12. 1.

1094

This is the second vsē.

3. Thirdly it is to be applied as an aduertisement to all those that Professe themselues to be knowers and doers of the word, to beware how by their euill liues, they be a meanes to bring the precious word of God into disgrace, wee see by euery daies experience, how forward men of corrupt minds are, to pry into the actions and courses of those, which seeme to haue some more respecte vnto the word of God, and to religion, then they themselues haue, & how ioyfull a thing it is vnto them, when they can haue but any colour of occasion to say. *Lo these be the men that be so full of scripture that talke so much of Gods worde, beholde their fruites, marke If they be not as bad, or worse then any other: This is a game vnto such, and by this meanes, they wretchedly strengthen themselues in their contempt of all goodnes: woe to him whosoeuer, that shall giue iust cause to such people of exception, and to make Gods precious word, to become a byword in the mouthes of euill men: how often doeth the Apostle giue charge to professors of religion, to looke vnto it, that the word of God be not euill spoken of? what a heauy accusatiō is it that is laied to the charge of the Iewes; the name of God is blasphemed among the gentiles through you; what a sharpe expostulation is that which is vsed by God him selfe againste dissembling hypocrites, which like a rower in a boate, lookes one way, and puls another, to professe one thing, and doe the contrary, what hast thou to doe to take my covenant in thy mouth &c. Dauid was a man deare vnto God, yet because by his adulterie and murder, he had made the enemies of God to blaspheme, the Lord would not suffer the fact to goe away without some testimony of his displeasure: And sure what euer thou be, be sure the Lord will punish thee, if thy euill life, thy not labouring to master thine owne affections, and to make thy conuersation such as becometh the Gospell, doe giue occasion to any profane person, to ieast at religion, and speake euill of the waies of Godlines. Remember it therefore yee that loue the word, remember it, I saie, that the word of God is precious, be not you a meanes to bring it into disgrace. This is the third vsē.*

Tit. 2. 5.

Rom. 2. 24.

Psal. 50. 19.

2. Sam. 12.

4. A fourth vse is to cutt off all vaine and idle vseing of the scripture: It is a common grace of some to vse some words or sentences of scripture, in steed of ieaits and proverbs, in their common talke, by which to delight themselves and other. The word of God is *Precious*, and ought to be vsed with greate regard. *I will looke vpon him that is of a contrary heart, and that trembleth at my words*. There is a great difference betwixt trembling at the word, and making of a mans selfe merrie by playing and toying with the word, the Lord lookes vpon the one and pittieith it; he sets himselfe against the other and will reuenge it. Wee haue an example of the practise of it in the historie of the Church, in that wicked Emperour Iulian, his manner was to reach vnto the Christians boxes on the eare, and withall to bidde them turne the other; for (saith he) your master biddes you that whosoever smiteth you on the cheeke, you should turne to him the other also: And so when he denied pay to the christia souldiers that were hired by him, and they complained therof vnto him; his answer was, that he did to make them fit for the kingdome of heauen; because Christ had said; Blessed are the poore in spirit, for theirs is the kingdome of heauen; thus this prophane wretch scoffed at the scripture: wee must labour to take heed of the like wretchednesse. Pilate was but a Heathē, yet the text saith that when he heard but the name of *the sonne of God*, he was afraid. Wee that professe our selues Christians should much more reuerence the holy word of God, in euery title whereof, the maiestie of God may be seene. You shall read that the *oyle* wherewith the tabernacle and the *Arke*, and the Priests were annointed was holy, and therefore no man might put it to any other vse, either to annoint his owne flesh with it, or to make a composition like vnto it: The like may be said of the holy doctrine of the scripture, it is appointed as an holy oile, to supple, and to refresh the soules and consciences of Gods people, and therefore may not be diuerted by vs, to any other profane or idle vse whatsoever. It is a taking of the name of God in vaine, and a breach of the third commaundement. These are the vses I thought good to make of this that the things of the law of God are called honourable or

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Isay. 66. 2.

Ioh. 12. 8.

Exod. 30. 31.

precious ; And thus much touching the first part of this clause, the commendation of Gods word, the matter of it, is very large, and it is very precious.

I come vnto the second part of the clause, touching the mercy of God in vouchsafeing his word vnto vs, in these words, *I haue written vnto them*; In the handling of this clause, sundry things are to be opened, as 1 *how it can be said that God hath written his word*: 2 *why it was meete to write it*: 3 *when the word of God began first to be writtē*, & *how it was preserved for the Churches vse all that time*: 4 *how we shalbe assured, that that which among vs is now called the scripture, is the very same word and precious will of God, which he hath writtē, for the vse and comfort of his people*. These points are meete to be opened, both for the well vnderstanding of this place in hand, and for the setting of vs against Atheisme, and the perswading of vs of the authoritie of the scripture. Time will not suffer me to enter into them all now, I will proceed as farre as I can. First *how it can be said that God hath written his word*?

God is said to haue written his word in two respects, 1 because the 10 commandements (of which all the rest that is written in the volume of the booke, is but as it were a comment or exposition) these I say were written after a secret, vnknowne, and vnutterable manner by God him selfe, according as the scripture doth often mention it, it is called *the finger of God*, by which according to the most ordinary interpretation of the anchient fathers, is meant, the spirit of God; Secondly God is said to haue written his word, because all the rest that was written (though men were the instruments) yet it was done by his appointment, and by his assistance. As concerning Gods appointment we read how Moses was commanded to write; so was Isay, so was Ieremie, so was Ezekiell, so was Habakuk, and so was Iohn as you shal read in the booke of the *Reuelation*: and when as Christ commanded his Apostles to be witnesses of him, and publishers of his truth and doctrine to the ends of the earth, and to deliuer that, of which the church should haue continuall vse to the worlds end, no doubt he did in that charge insinuat, that they should not only preach
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by word of mouth, but should commit the summe of their doctrine, to writing also; that the same might be preserved to all posterities. As it is plaine that God appointed the writing of the scripture; so he assisted the pen-men of it, by the extraordinary, and immediate, and infallible guidance of his spirit; for which we need no better prooffe then that one of Peters, now once or twice already mentioned: so then because God writte the law immediatly with his owne finger, and then both gaue commandement and order for the writing of the rest, and directed the writers so, that they could not in any thing indited by them be mistaken; the word is said to haue bin written by the lord.

1 Pet. 1. 21.

The vse hereof is first to be a confirmation to that which I said before, touching the perfection and price of the scripture; it must needs be an absolute & entire body, without any ether superfluity, or defect, and containe a most necessary & exact form of doctrine, seeing that god is the author of it, who both in his wisdom knew what was conuenient, and in his loue would not keepe secret any thing which he knewe to be for the necessary behoofe of his own chosen.

Again it can be no triuiall or base or vulgar matter, which is commended vnto vs, as it were out of the bosome of the Lord; and for the ratifying whereof, our Sauour Christ spent his owne blood; and in framing whereof the spirit of God hath breathed so extraordinarily. But the principall and more proper vse which we are to make hereof, is to be an assurance to vs, of the irrevocable & vncchangeable certaintie of the scripture: and that as our Sauour saith; *Heauen and earth shall passe away before one tittle thereof doe fall to the ground or fullfilled.* It is a good obseruation of one of the fathers; if Pilate (saith he) being but a man, after he had set the title ouer Christs head vpon the crosse; & was dealt with by the Jewes to alter it, could say, *quod scripsi scripsi*, meaning that hauing set it downe vpon good aduise he would not change it: much more may we be sure that the Lord hauing written his will, and set it forth to the view of the world as an absolute rule vnto all, will neuer alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth. Men alter their writings many times, because of some oversight, or mistaking,

Math. 5. 18.

Ioh. 19. 23.

2 Pet. 3. 9.

Heb. 13. 4.
Gal. 5. 21.
Psal. 15. 1. 5.

2 Tb. 1. 8.

Prov. 4. 21. 25.

Rom. 2. 4. 5.

1 Cor. 13. 8.

or because of some second thoughts wiser then their former, it were blasphemie to impute any such thing vnto God. Againethere is much failing in the execution of mens lawes, either through the remissenes of thole that are intrusted with them, or through want of power to goe thorough with them. The Lord is *neither like as men count slacknes* saith Saint Peter, neither yet is his hand shortened that he should not be able to see euery parcell of his holy pleasure put in execution. It may seeme needies to insist vpon this pointe, touching the vnfallible certaintie and fulfilling of the scripture, but if wee consider our times, wee shall see it is a needefull doctrine. For whatsoever mens profession is, their conuersation is such, that a man may well thinke of them, that they imagin the word of God to be but an idle tale, a frightfull sound to amaze fooles: full of terrible threatnings, but yet lighter then vanity in performance. Doth the vnchast person think it true, that *whoremongers and adulterers God will iudge?* doth the drunkard beleue, that *no such shall inherit the kingdome of God?* doth the vsurer imagin that there is any certainty in that speach, that *no such shalbe receiued into heauen?* doth the contemner of Gods word suppose, that that shall come to passe which Paul saith VIZ: that *the lord will in flaming fire, render vengeance to them that do not obey the Gospell?* doth the despiser of knowledge perswade himselfe, that Solomon spake with authoritie when he said, *The lord would laugh at his destruction?* doe those that presume vpon Gods mercy, and thinke they may liue how they will, and repent when they will, giue credit to that where it is said, that *these which doe despise the riches of Gods bounty, and abuse his patience, do but heape up wrath to themselves against the day of iudgement.* And so I might say in many other things, but likely that me think there is any truth in the words which are so flat against these courses of which their life is a continuall practise? sure it is not: for out of all doubt, if they had any such conceipt, and did not rather say to themselves as they did in Ieremies time, *it is but winde*, they would humble themselves before the Lord, for their euills past, and their future reformation should manifest their reuerent perswasion of the

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certainite of those Iudgements which stand vpon record in
in the scriptures . Therefore let vs remember this; this
scripture, this word , is not a deuise of man, it was writ-
ten by God; every curse writtē in it, shall fall vpon the vnre-
pentant, and every blessing promised therein, shall be made
good to the soule of every true beleever.

FINIS.

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THE

The second Sermon.



The next question to be handled in this place, touching that which God hath heere saied, that he had written the great things of his law, is, *why it was meete that the word of God should be comuted to writing.* As I haue proued vnto you that it was not writtē at aduētures out of the humors of som priuate mē, but by the special appointmēt & directiō of God; so it shall appeare that the writing of it was not vndertakē, but vpo very great reason, and for very exceeding good purpose. The maine and principall end, was the spirituall good and edification of Gods Church; that is not to be doubted, in asmuch as in all things the Lord hath a cheife respecte vnto the Glorie of his owne name in the good of his chosen: But how and in what manner, and for what respects, the writing of the word was necessary for the churches good; it shal be worth our labour to enquire. Vnderstand therfore that the writing of the word was, and is for the good of the Church in this respecte, euen that it may haue one certaine and vnfallible rule, by which all doctrine may be tryed, all controuersies in religion decided, all doubts resolued, and euery conscience firmly grounded and setled in Gods truth. For this cause we read that when there was no word written, but Moses law, the doctrine of the prophets was tried by it. After, when to the law of Moses were added the sermons of the prophets; then euery thing was referred vnto them: so Christ cleared his doctrine and made it good by Moses and all the prophets: & Pauls defence was this, that he had said no other things, *then those which Moses and the prophets did say should come.* And all the learned in the best times which followed, toke the same course, leauing themselues an example vnto vs, to make the written word, as it were the standard or the kings beame, by which to try all doctrine that is tendred to vs, accepting none for sound & good, but only that which is agreeing therunto. So that looke what necessity ther was that the Church should haue a Iudge to decide doubts

1st Th. 2. 10.

Luk. 24. 27.

1st Cor. 14. 22.

doubtes, and a true rule to find out, and to discern the truth; the same is there, that the word should be put in writing, for the common and perpetuall good of all posterity. If any man thinke that the word of God might as well and profitably haue proceeded for the Churches good, from hand to hand, by liuely voice, as by writing, the father commending it to his sonne, and so continuing it one after another to the end; he is much deceiued. For first the mind of man is very slippery and weake, and soone ready to forget the best things; secondly mans nature is very prone to error, & apt either to entertaine, or to broch new religions: and therefore to preuent forgetfulness, to auoid error, and to preserue the truth of God from corruption; it was meet the scripture should be written. It is worthy to be marked, the speech of Luke in the preface of his Gospel to that noble *Theophilus*, Luk. 1. he confesseth that he had been instructed, in the doctrine of religion; yet he thought to write vnto him *from point to point, that he might haue the certainty of those things*. So that though he had indifferent good knowledge before, yet writing the story was the meanes to beget certainty. *This shalbe written for the generation to come*, saith Dauid: writing is the best meaneuen (as we se by common course) to preserue a thing vnto posterity.

Psal. 102. 18. 1

Besides as in a generallitie it was necessary the word of god should be written, that there might be one certaine rule to iudge the truth by: so for one maine pointe of doctrine it was very behoofull, *viz.* to assure vs that Christe the sonne of Mary was the true Messias, who being once come, none other was to be looked for: To setle vs wherein, there could be deuised no more direct course then this, *viz.* that first the promises of his comming should be recorded, the nature and office and all other circumstances of his person described, and then the history of all his acts, his birth, doctrine, miracles, death exactlie registred; that so the following ages comparing both together, & seeing how euery promise was fulfilled, & euery prophesie accomplished, might resolue vpon it, that hee indeed was the Christe; and that there is no name else giuen vnder heauen wherby wee may be saued. An example of this vse of the written word, wee

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Luk. 24. 27.

Marc 14. 49.

Ioh. 11. 8

Ioh. 19. 4. 36.

haue in Christe himsele, who falling into company after his resurrection with two of his disciples, who were in some doubt; began at Moses (saith the text) and interpreted vnto them in all the scripture, the things which were written of him. And whosoever markes the course of the history of the Gospell shall often find, that when some speciall action of Christ is recorded, this, or the like is added to it; *This was done that the scripture might be fulfilled*; which sheweth how behoofull the writing of the promises, touching the Messias, was to be our ground in this maine point; that Christ Iesus is the one y appointed sauiour of mankind. Heere then is the issue of my speech: it was meete the word should be written, that the Church might neuer want a rule of religion, and in particular might be settled in this point, that the Christ in whom we beleue, is that Sauiour, whome wee neede not doubt to depend vpon. Let vs make vse of this point.

The vse is this: our courses (considering the obedience that we owe vnto God) should be answerable to Gods intents; sith therfore the intent of God in giueing order for the writing of his word, was the grounding and setting of our hearts in the truth of religion; it becometh vs to labour both to conceiue the doctrine of Godlines, so much as is necessary to saluation; and in matters that concerne the worship of God and our own soules health, not to build vpon opinion, conceipt, or the traditions of men whatsoever they be, but only vpon the scriptures: because when we come to giue an account (as wee must) of our religion vnto God; it shall not goe for currant, I beleueed, or I thought this, because such a one perswaded me, or because the law of the times so commaunded me, or because my fathers before me so thought, and from them I receiued it: but this answer onely shall be accepted, when a man shall be able to say, thus; *This my heart hath embraced, and vpon this haue I built my faith*, because God blessing the ministration of his holy word vnto me, I haue plainly perceiued, that it is the expresse doctrine of the written word, and the very same which God hath left vpon record for me to beleue. This is the only answer that shall be then accepted of. As many therefore as

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doe desire to haue comfort of their religion at the day of iudgement, must giue great heed vnto the reading & preaching of the word; & so in humilitie by praier be prepared to it, that in their secret thoughtes they may conceine; how the word of God is a warrant of their beleefe. Men thinke this is a matter of impossibilitie, and cast many perils (the deuill helping them forwarde) with many shifts to nouzell themselves in ignorance; but still the saying of the spirit of God is true, *knowledge is easie to him that will vnderstand*; and God will alwaies giue a blessing, and reueale *even his secrets* (as Dauid saith) *unto those that feare him*, and will be found of those that seeke him as they ought to doe. So much of this question and the vse of it, whie it was meete that Gods word should be written.

Prou. 14. 6.

Psal. 25. 14.

The next question necessarie for the clearing of this place, is, *When the word of God began first to be written, & how till that time it was preserved for the vse of Gods Church.* Touching which wee must hold, that Moses was the first writer of the word of God that euer was. It is the opinion of some (I know) that Enoch the seauenth from Adam, wrot something; and that they thinke may be proued out of the saying of Saint Iude, who alleageth some part of Enochs doctrine. But Iude saith, not, *Enoch wrot*, but *Enoch prophesied*; and it was possible for the summe of Enochs doctrine to be continued without writing. Besides one Iosephus, (who himselfe was a Iewe, and writ of antiquities,) saith that Adams offspring had erected two pillars, the one of brick the other of stone, in which they had engrauen many things; but these things are vncertaine. And that there was no part of Gods word written before Moses, it may thus be gathered. First because the Iewes, to whome as Saint Paul saith *the oracles of God were committed*, had not in their canon, any holy writ more auncient then Moses: secondly our Saviour labouring to proue himselfe to be the Messias, the text saith *he began at Moses*; if there had beene any author of greater antiquitie then Moses, no doubt our sauiour would haue alleadged it, inasmuch as all the scripture that was before him, was to giue testimony of him. And it is likely that God himselfe by writing the 10. Commandements extraordinarily with

August. lib. 1.

cui. 25. c. 23.

Iud. ver. 14.

Iose. Antiq. l. 1. c.

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Rom. 3. 2.

Luk. 24. 27.

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his owne fingers, did acquaint Moses with the manner of writing and the vse of letters, which for ought wee can find to the contrarie, vntill that time, was vnkowne. If it be demanded then, whether till then, the church and people of God were vtterly destitute of the word?

I answer no; for it was alwaies a truth, that God would accept of no worship, but that which was according to his word; voluntarie religion was hatefull vnto him, euen from the very first beginning. Sith then it is apparent, that before the word was written, God was truly worshipped, as by Adam, Abell, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. it must needs be that there was some word, or some reuealed and knowne wil of God to direct them. If you aske how the will of God was then made knowne, and how preserued? I answer, that the Lord reuealed it by holy oracles, by visions, & apparitions of Angells, yea and of Christ himselfe, who is ordinarily meant by the name of Angell throughout the old testament. *As sundry times and in diuers manners God spake to our fathers in the old time,* saith the Apostle. He spake to Moses *mouth to mouth*: He vsed also the ministry of man for the spreading of that truth abroad to many, which by vision or oracle was reuealed to few.

Heb. 1. 2.
Numb. 12. 8.

Thus the father to the sonne, one to another made known the will of God. But when the Church was enlarged, and (hauing beene shut vp in som few families) began to spread it selfe into a greater compasse, and with all, corruption in religion encreased, and the people of God by conuersing with Idolaters were more subiect to be misled; the lord gaue order to write the law, & in proceffe of time added the writings of the prophets as expositions of the law; and at the last, the new testament, to be a full and manifest discoverer of that mittery of Christ, which was more darkely (as it were) lapped in the types and figures and propheties of the old. So that this is the answer then to this question; til Moses began there was no word written, yet the church was not destitute, but by other meanes, was made acquainted with Gods will, and was informed in such things as pertained vnto life. We may make vse also of the clearing of this question.

First

First of all it giueth vs iust occasion to note and obserue, the continuall care and prouidence of God ouer his Church, in that he hath neuer left it vnsupplied, but in al times and ages from the beginning, hath taken a course for the right informing it, in such things as were behoofull and necessary thereunto.

Before Moses he taught the world by visions, & oracles, speaking vnto the sons of mē frō heauē with his own mouth. In the following times he ordained, and with his owne finger (as it were) consecrated the vse of writing, for the perpetuall preservation of that truth, which otherwise in common reason, ether time might haue worne out, or men of corrupt minds haue falsified, to the corrupting and poysoning of the church. So that God may truly say to his church in generall, as he did once to the Israelites, *what could I haue done more, which I haue not done vnto you. I haue spoken to you by visions, I haue reuealed my holy will by the ministry of Angells, I haue committed it to perpetuall record, that it might be turned into all languages, and read and perused by all men.* God hath not ben wanting to vs, if we shal now be wanting to our selues, we shall bring vpon vs a greater measure of condemnation: we shall neuer be able to say; this and this we would haue done, if we had knowne it, it shall alwaies be replied vpon vs, as it was to the people of old, *he hath shewed thee, O mā what is good:* the lord was neuer sparing or close-handed towards his Church, to secret any thing, which might be a means to bring it vnto life. 1104

Secondly, this mutuall following each of other, I meane of the making known of the word of God vnto the Church, by visions, and reuelations, and then after in the appointed time by writing, serueth to shew vnto vs, that as before the word was written, the power of God was not to be doubted of, but that he was fully able to acquaint his Church with all needfull matter; so now the word being written, no visions, or reuelations must be looked for. Now the written text is our only guide; and whosoever he should be, that vnder pretence of some speciall matter extraordinarily reuealed to him, from heauen, should indeauour to perswade vs

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cap. 24. 45.

any thing besides that which is already written, though he should bring neuer so great probabilities & shews of likelihood, yet he were not to be beleueed. It is true, Christ promised to send his spirit vnto his Church, and he hath and doth, still make good his promise, but yet, not that men vnder a pretence of the spirit, should contemne the scripture, but that they should be better able to profit by the scripture. For the prooffe whereof we haue an excellent place in *Luke*, where it is said, that Christ comming among his disciples after his resurrection, *opened their vnderstanding*, but to what end? what? that they should from that time despise the written word, and take vpon them to deliuer what they would, vnder a colour of being inspired from aboue? no; but he opened there vnderstanding, that they *might vnderstand the scripture*.

So that the increase of the gift of Gods spirit in them, did not priuledge them from tying themselves stil to the doctrine of the scripture. But you will marueile perhaps to what end I speake this? you shall know therefore, that as there were in the elder times certaine Heretiques called *Enthusiasts* which pretended (*I know not what*) visions, and secret conferences with the spirit of God, and so contemned the written word: So out of their ashes haue risen in our daies, men of the same humor, knowne by the name of the *Famely of loue*, who despised the ordinary course of the ministry of man, and of attaining to the knowledge of saluation by the written word, and stood vpon priuate reuelations, and such other idle fancies, commēding vnto men their owne dreames, vnder the name of the speciall instincts of Gods spirit: and the dregges of this grossenes are remaining among some to this day. Now least at any time wee should be deceiued with such senselesse and foolish pretences, wee must vnderstand that since God committed his word to writing, either visions, and the courses of that nature haue beene very seldome, or els all those to whome God hath so reuealed any thing, haue beene tied to the iudgement of the scripture. Saint Paul was taken vp into the third heauen, and had strange things discouered to him, yet this was stil his plea for himselfe, and the thing he stood vpon

vpon, that he said no other things then those which *Moses & the Prophets did say should come*. And therefore if either Papists, AD 3422. or Familists, or any of the like stamp, shall vnder any colour of visions or voices from heauē, and the like perswade vs to any thing contrary to that wee haue beene taught, let vs straight vrge them, to make their matters good by the word written; and then shall wee find that true which an ancient Father hath said, viz. that if you bring them once to defend their questions by scripture alone, they cannot stand. It hath alwaies beene the badge of Heretiques, that they were (*scripturarum Lucifuga*) men that could not abide the light of the scripture. And thus much for this question, when the word was written, and how the Church of God was instructed untill then. Tertul.

Now come wee to the last and waightiest, viz. that seeing God saith heere in our textre, that he hath written his law vnto vs; how wee may be assured, that that which wee now haue, & is called by vs gods word, is indeed that holy will of his, which he commaunded to be written for the good & comforte of his people? And this is a point of greate moment, because yf wee stagger therein, wee can haue no certainty of religion. Wherefore I pray you let us obserue it the rather, that wee may haue wherwith to stop the mouthes of Atheists and profane scoffers; and auoide also the doubtings & questiōs, which may sometimes arise in our owne hearts. Vnderstand therefore this first of all, that nothing is able to perswade a māns conscience, that the scripture is the word of God, but only the spirit of God. The Apostle Paule saith truly, that *no man can say that Iesus is the Lorde, but by the holy* 1. Cor. 12. 3. *Ghōste*. Therefore my meaning is to speake only of such testimonies which are of force to conuince the conscience, and to make men that thay shall not be able to deny the scripture to be from God, though to frame their hearts to yeeld vnto it, is in the power of God only to effect. Now to come a degree neerer to the matter, wee must know also that the best proofes for the scripture that it is gods word, are to be fetched out of it selfe; for which cause it is called *light*, because it discouereth it selfe; and many times *the testimonies* Pr 119. 105. & v. 2. 14. 23. &c. *of the Lorde*, because it beares witnesse to it selfe. The papists would haue vs stand to the Iudgment of the Church, which

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God.

is altogether doubtfull; for there may be as great a question made of the Church, whether it be the true Church of God, as of the scripture, whether it be the true word of God. The testimonie and authority of the Church may be some inducement to a man in this case, according as Saint Austine saith it was to him; but it can be no certaine argument. Know this then, that there is a certaine euidence of Gods spirite, as it were imprinted in the scripture, which sheweth the diuine excellency therof, aboue all the writings of men whatsoever. And this stands vpon sundry particulars; First, the purity of the law of God written by Moses, aboue all the lawes that haue bene euer enacted and deuised by the wisest men. Wee read of many worthy law-giuers among the Heathen, that ordained statutes of great wisdom for the gouernment of their people: yet was ther neuer any law deuised by the wit of man, but it needed some reviewing, and for some respect was ether to be repealed, or abridged, or enlarged; besides that, scarce any law can be so wisely framed by a state, but some or other will find a shifte to doe the very thing, which the intente of the law was to forbidde, and yet free himselfe from the danger of the law, & stand vpon tearmes as if he had not broke it. It is not so in the law of God, as it was first giuen out, so it stands, without any changing, nether was there euer any found, able to carrie himselfe so cunningly in the practise of any euil, but this law in one respect or other would surely find him guiltie. Secondly, the qualitie of the matter in scripture: In the writings of the Heathen wee shall find some giuen here and there of the myserie of mankind, and some cold comforts taught for the releuiing it, but the true opening of the direct cause of mans miserie, to witte *sinne*, and the entring in of sinne into the world by *Adams fall*, and the perfect and full remedie for all this, namely *Christs death*, was neuer knowne or heard of, but only from the scripture. Thirdly, the antiquitie of the scripture; for the bookes of Moses are more auncient, then any humane writers, in that they set downe a historie from the beginning of the world, a thing which other writers knew not of, or els borrowed from Moses, or els, corrupted with many fables, and ridiculous

narrations. Besides there is no writer of any humane story, that can be prooued to be more ancient then Nehemias & Ezra, who were about the yeare of the world 3500. Fourthly, the admirable consent of the whole body of the scripture within it selfe, all conspiring together in this one point, that *through the name of Christ all that beleene in him, shall receiue remission of sinnes.* what shewes of vncertaintie and differences soeuer may appeare, either in numbring of yeares, or in any circumstance of historie, or in any point of doctrine; are so fully & apparently reconciled by those which haue laboured therein, that there can be no iust colour of exception. Fifthly, the certaine euents of the propheties thereof, as of the comming of the Messias, the calling of the gentiles, the reuealing of Antichrist, of the the going of the posteritie of Abraham into Egypt, & their deliuerance thence, of the sower Monarchies by Daniel. And it is worth the noting which wee read in Isay, who speaking of the captiuitie of the people of the Iewes in Chaldea, doth not only prophesie their deliuerance, but names the very man by whom the Lord would saue them, *Cyrus*, and yet Isay liued at the least a thousand yeares before Cyrus was borne. Like vnto that was that prophesie of the man of God aginst the Altar of Bethell built by Ieroboam, he names the partie *Iosiah*, & relates the particulars what he should doe, and yet it was at least 330. yeares before Iosiah was borne. So Ieremy told the people the iust number of yeares in which they should be captiues vnder Babilon, (70. yeares). And wee our selues if wee will obserue it, may see daily how the propheties of the scripture are accomplished. Paul said in the last times *men should brooch doctrines of devills, viz. forbidding to marry, & commanding to abstaine from meates*, we see it veresied in Popery: he saith againe, that in the last daies *men shall be louers of themselves, &c.* doe wee not perceiue among our selues; how these euills daily doe increase? he saith further, the time will come *when men wil not suffer wholesome doctrine.* we may behold how this is made good euery day. There is no doctrine more wholesome, then that which is applied to mens particular sinnes, & yet it is a thing which men will not endure. Saint Peter prophesied, & so did Saint

Ag. 10.43.

Isay. 45.1.

1. King. 13.2.

Ier. 25. 11.

1. Tim. 3.2.

2. Tim. 4.3.

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2. Pet. 3. 3.
Iud. 18.

Gen. 49.

Gen. 5.

chap. 12.

1. Tim. 1. 13.

7

Iude, that in the last times, there should *be mockers, men walking after there owne lusts*, we need nor goe farre to see the accomplishment of this prophecy. How doe men despise the Iudgments of God; and scoffe at all goodnes, and prefer the satysfying of there owne lusts, before obedience to the will of God? Thus that which we our selues are witnesses of, declares the certaine euents of the foretelling of the scripture, and it is an assurance vnto vs, that it is the word of God. Sixtly, the vnpartiall faithfullnesse of those that haue been enditors of the seuerall books. In Moses it is worth the noting how he preferreth the relating of the truth of the story, before the discrediting of his owne birth; he was borne of the tribe of Leui, yet if you read *Gen. 49.* you shall finde he doth not spare to report, the hard sentence that old Iacob gaue of Leui at his death, *Simon and Leui, brethren in euill, instruments of cruelty, into their secret let not my soule come, &c.* And in *Numbers* he doth not spare Aaron and Miryam his owne brother and sister, but hath left their sinne, and the displeasure of God against it, vpon perpetuall record: nay, he is not ashamed to reueale his owne error, and how much the lord was offended with him, and how for it he threatned him, that he should neuer come into the promised Canaan: he doth in the story many times make mention of it. It is said that Saint Marke wrot the gospell out of Peters mouth, and yet the denyall of Peter is more expressly laid downe by Marke, then by any other Euangelist. And Paul sets downe with his owne pen, his owne faults in more sharpe measure, then any other man would doe, *I was a blasphemor, a persecutor, an oppressor.* This argueth that these men were guided by God, in that they were so free from flattery, that they spared not themselues. We know it is contrary in other writers: you shall see generally those that write histories, speake partiallie ether of some me, or of their own natiue coutries: as if a man should read the Chronicles of England, he would thinke that to be the only country. It sheweth the scripture to haue been guided by some higher spirit, it being so free from all partiality. Seauenthly, the wonderfull preservation of the bookes of the scripture: At the first, the two tables of the law which were written by Gods owne finger, were appointed

ted by the Lord to be laid vp in the Arke, and the whole Deut. 10. 2, 5, 8.
Tribe of Leui commanded to attend it.

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Next, the bookes which Moses himselfe wrot, as he wrot Exod. 24. 27.
them by the speciall appointment of god, (as appeares) so Deut. 31. 9.
he deliuered it to the sonnes of Leui also to be kept. Ioshua Iosh. 24. 26.
tooke the same course for the preservation of that which he 1. Sam. 10. 25.
had written: So did Samuell, yet this is nothing in respect
of that which followed. The prophesy of Ieremy was bur-
ned by king Ichoiakinne, therby thinking to abolish the
whole memory of it; but the lord presently caused the same
to be written againe, yea, and added thereunto many words.
When Manasses and Ammon, two wicked kings to the end Jer. 36.
they might the better draw the people to Idolatry, and to
keep them in it, had suppressed the booke of the law; yet in
the daies of Iosias, it pleased God, that euen in the ruynes of
the temple, the booke of the law was found againe. It is re-
corded in the booke of Maccabees, how that king Antio-
chus cut in peices, and burnt al the bookes of che law which
he could find, and followed the matter so extreame, that
whosoever had a booke of the testament found by him, he
should be put to death. And Eusebius an aunient writer of
the story of the Church, reports how Dioclesian a heathen
Emperour, and a cruell persecutor, both forbad the vse of
the bookes of the prophets and Euangelists, and consumed
them with fire also. So that indeed it is a very miracle, and
an argument that the scripture is from aboue, in as much as
notwithstanding the perpetuall eumity of the deuill against
it, the indeauours of Heretiques to corrupt it, the practises
of Tyrants vtterly to abolish it, and the many hazards which
the Church hath been in, which could not chuse but endan-
ger it; yet it hath ben preserved whole and entyre, yea, eue
in the originall tongues, the old testament in the Hebrew,
and the new in the Greek, euen vnto this day: we may well
apply vnto it the words of the Psalme, *It is the Lords doing,* Ps. 124. 8.
and it is marueilous in our eyes. Eightly, the forme and dignity
of the stile, which is (as I said) Fulnes of maiesty in simplici-
ty of words. There is no parte or tittle of it which sauoureth
of any earthlines; the maiesty of the sentences is such, as it
cannot be fully and wholly conceiued and vttered by any
man;

man; and yet it is alwaies more powerfull in matter, then in words. And we see the bookes called the Apochripa, who haue endeauoured to expresse the excellency of that holy stile; are yet so farre from it, that they are but cold, and euen barbarous in comparison. Ninthly, if when we consider the excellency of the matter, and the heauenly Maiesty of the stile, we shall remember also what kind of men they were which wrot it, it will adde some strength vnto this prooffe. For if we consider them simply in themselves, we shall see how vnfit they were by all likelihood for such a story. Moses first a shepheard, then a prophet; Jeremy a yery child by his own confession; Peter a fisherman, one that was neuer trayned vp in learning; Mathew a publican, a meere stranger to the things of God; Luke a phisitian, learned, but yet not accustomed in things of that quality; Paul a persecutor, a professed enemy to the doctrine of the gospel: It could not chuse but be some heauenly and spirituall power, that should call, & afterwards enable these mē vnto this waighty busines to be the penmē of that, in which so much admirable excellēcy doth appeare. Tēthly, let vs cōsider also the power & efficacy of the scripture. There is no man but if he obserue it and hearken to it, shall finde the power of it, how it searcheth into the very secrets of a mans heart, and *deuides asunder the soule and the spirit*, and is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents*; it striketh a terror into the very consciences of those, which are the greatest enemies vnto it, and would seeme to despise it: and that is the very thing, that hath caused it to haue so many and greiuous aduersaries among men. We may behold also how it works to the reclaiming of many men from their euill waies; what fruits of holines it brings forth in the liues of diuers that professe it, with contempt of the world, what hatred of sinne, what duties of mercy; yea, and how the loue and sweetnes thereof hath so possessed the hearts of some, that they haue ben content not only to sacrifice, their wealth, their credit, their good name, their liberty for it, but euen their very liues, and to chuse rather to beare any torments, then to disclaime that holy truth, which by the teaching of the scripture, they haue once thoroughly entertained. Thus this power of the word in

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Exod. 3. 1.
Ier. 1. 6.
Math. 4. 18.
Math. 9. 9.
Col. 4. 4.
1. Tim. 1. 13.

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Heb. 4. 12.

in conuincing some, in conuerting others, in amazing some, in reioicing others, in drawing some earnestly to loue it, in prouoking others deeply and tiranously to detest it, this same secret and effectuell working of it (I say) vpon the secret powers of the soule, is a testimony for the scripture, that it is no deuise of man, but the very sacred will of God. These ten tokens, I haue thought good to commend vnto your care and consideration, by which it may be manifested vnto vs, that that which we call the Bible, and is dayly commended vnto vs to be *the word of god*, is indeed that which it is said to be, and the very thing by which we shalbe iudged at the last day. 1. The purity of the law. 2. The matter of the scripture, the description of mans misery, and of the true remedy for it. 3. The antiquitie of it. 4. The consent of it with it selfe. 5. The certaine euent of all prophecies. 6. The vnpartiall dealing of those that write it. 7. The miraculous preservation of it from the first writing till now. 8. The maiestical stile wherein it is written. 9. The condition of the penmen before they were called to that seruice. 10. The power & efficacie of it in the working vpon mens consciences. Howsoeuer (as I haue said) nothing is able to perswade the minde, but only the spirit of God, yet these particulars are of force to conuince, and to proue vnto men, whether they will or no; that the scripture is no humane history, but the oracle of God, ordayned by him, to be as it were, *a light shining in a darke place*, (as Saint Peters words are) that by the direction therof, our feet may be *guided in the way of peace*.

The world groweth to a ripenes and perfection in al kind of sinne, and the Lords long suffering hath made many to thinke, that religion is but a toy, and all scripture merely vanitie: and many hearing manifest testimonies alleadged out of the scripture against their lewdnes, are not afraid to say, that sure it is not all from God, which is said to be his word. Besides that euery man by nature shall find a spice of Atheisme, euen in his owne bosome, and he shall find doubtings arise sometimes euen in these maine Points, how he shall know scripture to be scripture, and that there is such a God, and a Christ, and a Hell, and a Heauen, as is there made mention of. And therefore for strengthening of vs, both

gainste the Atheists, and scorner which wee shal meete with in the world, and the doubtings which may spring vp in our owne hearts, I haue thought good (my text giuing me so iust occasion), to discourse thus largely of this matter. for wheras God saith here he hath written to vs his law, wee cannot possibly make any true profitable vse of this speech, excepte wee be cleared in this point; That that which wee account Gods law, is that same doctrine which his will was should be committed to writing for our good.

The third Sermon.



Ut they were counted as a strange thing. This is the second parte of this verse, the former shewed the bounty of God vouchesafeing his law; this sheweth the vnthankfulnes and impiety of men in despising his law; sixth that by the very course of the words, it is plaine that there is a faulte here discovered, therefore in the handling of this part, I will follow this course. 1. I will shew the nature of the fault. 2. I will open the greatnes of it. 3. I will declare what punishment is belonging to it. 4. I will apply it to to see whether it be not also our fault. fifthly, when it is manifest that to count the word of God *as a strange thing* is a fault, and such a one as shalbe punished, and which is also our fault; I wil then teach of what vse all these points ought to be vnto vs, and what we must indeauour to learne thereby; these be the parts and points of this daies sermon, all necessary to the profitable handling of this clause. And first what the fault was, and wherein this people trespassed, when they are said to haue counted the great matters of gods law, *as a strange thing*.

The effect and substance of the faulte in a word was this, that how be it the lord had committed and commended his

his word vnto them, for their necessary vses, intending that it should be familiar vnto them, and alwaies at hand with them as a Councillor in all their occasions to aduise them, yet they reputed it as a matter, not pertaining to them; so that, wherein they ought to haue bene most conuersant in it, they were the greatest strangers; neither were they lesse seene, or more slenderly experienced in any one thing, then the rules and precepts of the scripture. That is breifely the very true faulte, for which the vnthankfull Iewes are challenged in this place, and that was my first pointe. Now left when wee shall be found guilty of the same trespasse, it should seeme vnto vs but a slight offence; let me draw you to the next point, which is the greatnes of it, and how grosse a thing it is to counte the honorable matters of Gods law, as a *strange thing*. I will endeauour to make it manifest after as familiar a manner as I can. This is that therfore which I say of it, that it was a fault, compounded and made of 3. grosse euils; 1 is disobedience, 2 vnthankfulness, 3 neglect of their owne priuate good, euen the good of soules. First it was disobedience; for the commaundement of God was very straite, that they should all, one and other acquainte themselues with the things of his law, wherof that one place which is in Deutronomy, is a sufficiēt witnes; *And these words &c.* Therefore besides the ordinarie course of teaching by the Leuits in the Temple, the Lord commaunded, to bind them as *signes vpon their heads, and write them vpon the Postes of their house, & vpon their gates.* & all to the end that the law of God by that means might become familiar vnto them: so that it was a manifest contempte of Gods commaundement, to passe that by, as matter which concerned them not, which the Lords desire and will was by all meanes to accustome them vnto. As it was disobedience to the expresse will of God, (and so according to the saying of Samuel to Saule, *as bad as sinne of witchcraft.*) so it was vnthankfulness also, & a most odious abuse of gods kindnes. Consider how; marke the words of my text, *I haue written to them &c.* saith God, so that the written word is as it were an epistle or letter sent from the Lord vnto his Church. A letter I say of which the matter is waighthy, and such as

chap. 6. 8. 7.

1. Sam. 15. 23.

1734.

concernes all, euen in the hightest degree; so the carriage & frame of it, considering what the Lord is in respect of vs, is full of exceeding kindnes, many gracious promises, many kind entreaties, many fatherly aduertisements, euery word in a manner, sauouring of vnspeakeable loue. Now put case a king should write a letter to his meanest subiects, nay to such as being traytors to him, stood at his mercy to be disposed with at his pleasure (for so is the case betwixt God and vs) and should in all temperate manner speake graciously vnto them, promising vpon their submission, a finall remitting of their misbehaviour, yea & a purpose to take them finally into his fauour; yf these men thus at the kings pleasure, and thus kindly written vnto, should throw the letter aside, not vouchsafeing to peruse it, what name would wee giue vnto this demeanor; we would say vnthankfullnes were too fauourable a terme, presumption, villeny, vntollerable insolency; we would not know how to discribe it. How must it not needs then be vngratitude in a higher degree, that the lord writing to his enemies (as we are all by nature) such a gracious letter of reconcilement, sueing to win vs, when as it were meeter that we should euen with teares of bloud importune him: yet the sonnes of men whose breath is in their nostrils, not waighing this vnutterable kindnes, should dare to set at naught such a message, and to let it slip as if it were some idle stuffe, not worth the looking on? Again wheras it is often touched in the scripture, that the lord had a speciall regard ouer the Iewish nation, more then to any other vnder heauen; the liberty of enioying the law of god, is noted as the principal benefit which the lord vouchsafed them. *What nation is there so great (saith Moses) that hath ordinances and lawes so righteous, as all the law which I set before you this day.* And Dauid in the Psalmes haueing spoken at large touching the prouidence of God ouer all mankind, cometh at last to shew wherein the Iewes had the preeminence aboue all other, in these words; *He shewed his word vnto Iacob, his statutes and iudgments vnto Israell, he hath not dealt so with euery nation:* And Saint Paul propounding to himselfe this question, *what is then the preferment of the Iew?* answereth it thus, *cheifly because vnto them were committed the*

Deut. 4. 8.

Ps. 147. 19, 20.

Rom. 3. 1, 2.

oracles

oracles of God. So then seeing among all the blessings that God bestowed vpon the, this was the choise, that the great things of the law were committed vnto them, in it must needs be an argument of extreame vnthankfulnes in them to make so slight account of so great a fauour.

The third euill of which this euill here reprobued in them, was compounded; was, neglect of their owne priuate good. For the lord had not commended to them, the things of his law, simply as a meanes by which they might shew their obedience vnto his authority, but the intent of the lord therein was the furtherance of their good. *I gaue them* (saith God) *statutes and ordinances, which if a man doe, he shall liue in them:* the glory should haue returned to God by their obedience, but the cheife profit should haue beene their owne. and therefore for them to let the law lie, like some old booke out of vse, or some other forlorne or forraigne matter, it could not but argue a most miserable neglect, and bewray them to be men of a most profane and dissolute disposition: so then if you demaund what great matter this was, for which this people was so highly blamed in these words, *They haue accounted the great things of the law, as a strange thing?* I answered, it was an error comprising vnder it. 3. some euills; 1. rebellious disobedience to Gods expresse comādmēt: 2. presumptuous contempt and base estimation of gods great kindnes. 3. the desperate neglect of the saluation of their owne soules. This is the second point. Now for the third.

Which is, touching the punishment due to this fault: if we haue obserued what hath beene said before touching the nature of the sinne, we cannot doubt, ether that it deserues a punishment, or that the lord will surely proceed against it in his due time: but yet if we shall consider what the scripture saith of it in particular, it wil much more affect vs. Thus much therefore we may generally vnderstand that the lord punisheth no sinne more greiuously, then the contemning of his word; and thereof we haue no more full and pregnant example then this Iewish nation. For wheras sundry times before the comming of Christ in the flesh, the wrath of God came vpon them, that the iudgments wherwith they

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were visited, made eue their eares to tingle that heard them, and brought that very people, whome he had carried (as it were) in his armes out of Egypt, to become a hissing and a by-word to the whole world; whosoeuer obserueth the course of the prophets, shall finde that the principall ground of all this, was their slight account of the holy doctrine of God, their preferring the inuentions of men, the guises of other nations, and the traditions of their fathers; before the blessed will of the lord manifested and reuealed to them in his law. But lest we should thinke this is nothing to vs (though indeed it was left written to admonish vs) concerning this matter, there are two places of holy scripture especially to be considered, and they are both in the booke of the Prouerbs, the one is, *he that turneth away his eare from hearing the law: euen his prayer shalbe abhominable.* marke I pray you; there is no duty in the holy scripture to which the lord hath promised a greater blessing then the duty of prayer; the lord takes it as an honor vnto him, to haue this title, to be called the *hearer of prayers*; yet the neglect of Gods word, the making no account of the meanes to bring vs to the knowledge of it, turnes alla mans prayers into sinne, stops vp the eares of the lord vnto all his sutes, doth (as it were) barre vp the gate of heauen against him, that though his request be neuer so earnest, yet it is vnpossible for him to haue entrance. God will heare no prayer that proceeds from him which doth not esteeme the knowledge and vnderstanding of his word; a fearefull Iudgment.

Chap. 28. 9.

Ps. 65. 2.

Chap. 1. 22.

vc. 25.

The other place is, *O you fooles, how long will you loue foolishnes, & the fooles hate knowledge; and againe, you haue despised all my counsell, & would none of my aduice;* mark now what followes, *I will also laugh at their destruction, & mocke when their feare commeth.* I beseech you in the feare of God, let vs consider it. The lord is often reported of, to vs in the scripture by the name of a mercifull God, a God that doeth not punish willingly: a God that doeth not take delight in the death of him that dieth: what a grievous sinne then must that needs be, which turneth that so sweete and gracious nature of God into that extremity, that he should euen reioice at mens destruction, & take pleasure in their torment. And yet

yet this reckoning the word of God as a *strange thing*, brings forth this strange effect, and makes that God who delights in mercy, to please himselfe in the seirce execution of his vengeance.

Thus then wee end this point. if you aske what iudgment is due to this offence of not regarding the *greate things* of Gods law, I answer, in generall it sets open the very floodgate of Gods wrath as appeareth by the example of the Iewes; 2 in perticular, it makes all our praiers odious, and the torment of our soules, a matter of reioyceing and pleasure to the Lord. It is truly saied of our Sauour, *To whom God giues much, of him he requires much*. The liberty of his word is the greatest blessing, and therfore the contempt therof must needs bring vpon vs the greatest vengeance. Lue. 14. 33.

Come wee now to the next point, to see whether this fault thus described, and thus deseruing to be punished; be not our faulte also, that so wee may by degrees make a way to that which is the vse and drift of the whole scripture.

And first heare, to the end that it may appeare, that this is our fault to neglect Gods word, we must necessarily enquire, whether the lord hath not afforded vs the same blessing, I meane the liberty of his word. It is a thing that cannot be denied, that the kindnes of God in his behalfe towards vs, is no whit inferior to that which in former times he shewed to the Iewes, I do thinke that no man can name any one particular tending to the discouery and making manifest of the law: of God, which is not graunted to vs in as great a measure, as it was to them: Nay looke by how much the ministry of the gospell doth exceed the ministry of the law, by so much is the mercy of God greater vnto vs, then vnto them; because it is free for vs to behold the substance of that, wherof they saw but the shadowes only. So that the lord may euery way and in euery respect, say to vs as truly, as euer he might say to them, *I haue written to you the great things of my law*. It is manifest then I thinke to euery one that vnderstandeth any thing, that we are nothing inferior to the Iewes in respect of the blessing. I doubt not but it shall also appeare, that we do fully match them, nay I beleeeue, go farre beyond them in the contempt. And to the end I may
make

make good that which I say, let me shew it in particulars how he word of God, the holy will of God reuealed in the scripture is a meere stranger vnto vs; a thing that is farre, from being so well knowne, and so familiar vnto vs as it ought to be; and let that which I say be credited, onely so farre, as your owne consciences shall find it to be true. The word of God is a strange thing to our iudgments, a strange thing to our thoughts, strange to our affections, strange to our tongues and speeches, strang to our courses and to our ordinary conuersation. if this be true, how shall we be able to shift of the like challenge from the lord, which is heere made against the Iewes; vz: that we haue accounted the great things of Gods law as a strange thing. First it is straung to our iudgments; that appeareth by our exceeding ignorance in the things of God, and by that extreame dulnes of conceipt which is still to be seene in vs: There is scarcely any one thing of those which doe necessarily & generally concerne men, wherein the greatest parte of our people are lesse seene, then the doctrine of Gods word; there is nothing which they heare spoken of in any company, or vpon any occasion, the meaning course, and scope wherof they doe lesse apprehend, then the rules & precepts and instructions of the scripture: men of yeares and great experience, skillfull in the courses of the world, wise in their affaires and very polittique, well seeme in matters of law, able to speake well and with good aduise about outward things, a man would wonder to heare their weaknes and simplicity in religio. This shewes that the law of god is a *strange thing* to our iudgments; there is nothing lesse knowne, there is nothing lesse conceiued. Secondly, it is *strange* to our thoughts; Truth is, Thoughts are knowne only vnto God, who is the sole searcher of mens hearts; but yet (if our consciences being appealed vnto) wee will speake the truth as it is, I belecue that wee must (whether wee will or no) confesse, that our mindes are so (in a manner) wholly taken vp with couetous, ambitious, ydle, wanton, reuengfull thoughts, rising out of our corrupt hearts, as from a continuall spring, that there is scarcely any roome or time for any priuate questionings or communings wih our selues touching *the words of eternall life,*

life, and the greates things of Gods law. Such meditations Ioh. 6. 68. 1.720

may sometimes (perhaps) knock at the outward doore of our hearts, or (it may be) find, vpon a fit some sodaine and superficiall entertainment, but (alas) they are quickly vanished; and like a *serpent vpon a stone, or a shippe in the middes of the sea*, leaue no print behind them; and by that meanes

Pro. 30. 19.
Coff. 3. 16.

neuer come to pitch with vs or to dwell plenteously in our heartes Thirdly there is a small acquaintance betwixt the word of God and our affections: I neede say no more to proue it but this, namely, that there is nothing which doeth sooner tire vs out, and make our spirits dull & lumpish, then the exercises of the word, in what kind soeuer. In other things wee are like to the *Horseleaches daughters, which crye,*

Pro. 30. 15.

giue, giue, and we are seldome heard to say *it is enough*: but in matters of religion we are very moderate; compendious sermons, breife discourses, short prayers, hasty meditations, these please vs best. Indeed were it not for very shame, we would haue none at all. Thus Gods word is not to vs as a beloued freind, of whose sweet acquaintance we could neuer be weary, but as some vnwelcome stranger, who (it may be) by importunity, getteth a nights lodging with vs, but his departure pleaseth vs better then his comming.

Now fourthly for our tongues and speeches, let vs call to minde our ordinarie conferences, at home, at worke, in iournies, in meetings, in going and coming too and from the church, and then saie truly, whether if our sauiour Christ should suddainly chop in amongst vs, as he did to see the two disciples traueling to Emaus, and should saie to vs as he

Luk. 24. 15.

did to them, *what manner of communications are these that you haue one to another?* we should be able to answere him for on time of a thousand, that we are reuerentlie and soberlie communing together of good things, conferring of the things in which publiquellie we haue beene taught, that so we might both *edify our selues in our most holy faith*, and might also prouoke and stirre vp one another *to good workes*. doubtles (as it was said to Peter) our *very speech would bewray vs*,

Iud uer. 1. 6.
Arb. 10. 24.

and the barrennes of our talke, would discouer the drines and deadnes of our hearts. But now lastlie although the word of God doe now and then twang vpon some mens

Judg. 16. 25.

Psal. 119. 24.

Gen. 19. 9.

tongues, and be made a matter of discourse and table-talk, to take vp the time, or to shew wit, or els be called in by some profaine ones, as Sampson was by the Philistins, *to make them pastime*, yet it is most vniuersally a stranger to mens liues and conuersations. It is madnes in the worlds account for a man in all things (with Dauid) *to make the testimonie* of the lord, *his counsellors*, and to stand vpon these strict and nice termes of conscience, as not to aduenture vpon any thing, but that which he may warrant vnto his owne soule therby. Shall it not hinder my profit? will it be no blemish to my reputation, may I thereby further such & such purposes? are ther any examples of men of some note and fashion in the world running the same courses? Here is the ordinary religion of the world; but as for laying the precepts of the word as precise rules for the ordering of al our waies, and the guiding of our liues in the lords path, it is a thing so ridiculous, & vnreasonable in common Iudgment, and through discontinuance of these euill times so out of vse, that when as the word challengeth that right of gouerning vs which the Lord hath giuen it, men forth with (so strange a thing is it vnto them to beare the yoke) snuffe and are not afraid to expostulate with it, as the Sodomites did with Lot, shall it, *being a stranger iudge & rule ouer vs*? Thus I haue by particulars confirmed this point; viz that wee are as deseruedly liable to this reproofe, as the Iewes were. The Lord wrote vnto them *the greate things of his law*; so he hath done to vs; *they accounted them as a strange thing*, wee are very equall to them in contempt.

Now for the last point propounded, namely the vse of all that hath beene saied, it must needs be this: viz: That seeing to account the *greate things* of Gods law as a *strange thing*, is 1 a faulte, 2 a greuous fault, 3 a faulte liable to so extreame punishment, and 4 our faulte: there is no remedy (vnlesse by a bold persisting in an apparent euill wee will prouoke God) but wee must henceforth giue all diligence, that the word of God may be no more a stranger vnto vs, but a dweller with vs, and may become familiar vnto vs. That this is a dutie from which no man is exempted, the scripture is manifest, in which (if the whole body of it through-

throughout be examined (there is no releasement or dispensation giuen vnto any to neglect the searching of Gods booke; nether was it euer maintayned by any doctrine; but by doctrine of Popery, that ordinary men need not seeke to be made acquainted with the scripture. Wee read that when the Philistins had the Israelits in bondage, one pollicy to 1. Sam. 13. keepe them vnder, and to detaine them in perpetuall thralldome, was this; they left them neuer a smith throughout all the land, and what was their reason, *least* (saied they) *the Hebrewes make them swordes & speares.* if they tooke away 19. ver. their weapons from them, it was an easie thing to oppresse them. The very like pollicy was vsed in the dayes of Popery, to the end to continue the people in blindnes, that they might not descrie the abomination of that religion, by the light of the scripture. They tooke the bible from them, and shutt it vp in Colledges and libraries, and suffered it not to passe, but in a language which the vulgar vnderstood not. And as in that bondage of the Israelites vnder the Philistins, no man could shearpnen his mattock, his axe, and his weeding hooke, but they must be beholding to the Philistins, and take of them such helpe, as they would vouchsafe to afford them; So in the daies of Popish blindnes, no common man wanting the helps of learning and knowledge in the tongues, could enioy the benefite of any spirituall sharpening, any comforte for his soule, but as it pleased those tirants ouer Gods heritage to bestow vpon them. So that the contempte of the scripture of God (which is the common sicknes of the country) is naught else, but a very dregg of popery; ignorance being the scepter of that kingdom; and the reasons which euen the most learned papstis alleadge for the discharging of the Laity, from conuerting with the scripture, being the very same which euery profaine ignorant person, is able by the priuate teaching of his owne corrupt heart, to pleade on the behalfe of his owne carelesnes. Well, the scope of this place (which is a parte of that holy truth by which wee must be iudged at the last day) requireth at our hands better things: and if wee be any whit ashamed of our former neglect, and thinke our selues bounde in conscience, to grow into a farther degree of familiarity,

miliarity with the word of God, the vseing of these helpes shalbe a greate furtherance.

I An humble setting our selues to schole to the publique ministry. In Christe are *hid all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge*; and in the sound and sincere preaching of the word, there is plainly set out vnto vs the very *mystery of Christ*.

Col. 2. 3.
1. Cor. 13. 11.

To this course is the blessing promised, that it shall *saue them that beleue*, especially when it is yeilded to with humility, & with a holy disclaiming of a mans owne seeming wisdom. For the Lord will *guide the meeke in Judgment, & teach the humble his way*, yea his very *secret is revealed* vnto such:

Psal. 119. 9. 14.
2. Cor. 3. 19.
Rom. 2. 12.

according as on the contrary *he catcheth the wise in their owne craftines*, and maketh them *become fooles*, when they professe the greatest wisdom. If wee would then grow into more & more acquaintance with the scripture, wee must weare out the threshold of the Lords house, and *wait daily at his gates, & giue attendance at the postes of his doores*: For *if thou cause thine eares to hearken vnto wisdom, and incline thine heart: then shalt thou vnderstand the feare of the lord, and finde the knowledge of God*. if in our affections and

Pro. 8. 33.
Pro. 2. 2. 5.

care we be strangers to publique teaching, we may perhaps haue some smattering and superficiall knowledge, but can neuer haue any true tast of the marrow and sweetnes of the scripture. 2 priuate exercise, namely an aduised, intentiue, and well prepared reading (if we be able) or a hearing others read. This rubs vp the memory of things heard publicquely, confirms the iudgment, makes fit to descend vpon the church instruction, and inures to the phrase and language of the scripture: 2 a busy and secret meditating and exercising the thoughts about such things as we haue receiued. This doth (as the Apostles speakes) *deliuer*, and (as it were) cast vs into the *forme*, and mould of *doctrine* which we heare, and seasoneth the inner man, euen the *spirit of the minde*, with that holy truth which we haue learned. 3 A reuerent and discreet conference touching heavenly things as occasion falleth sometime with our minister, sometimes with our neighbours, sometimes at home with our families, sometimes abroad euen *as we walke by the way*. This is a notable quickning for our selues, and a great help to others

Rom. 6. 17.

Mar. 4. 10.
Heb. 3. 13.
Chap. 3. 10. 24.
Deut. 6. 7.
Luk. 24. 13. 14.

thers

thers. *The lips of the wise doe spread abroad knowledge; and feed many.* Pro. 3.7. Pro 10. 21.

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At the left some of these priuate exercises should daily be performed. for miserable is that man who for one whole day together, doeth nether busie his tounge, nor employ his thoughts, nor apply his eares to some holy vse, to heare, or talke, or muse about something by which he may be built vp in Christ Iesus. 3 Carefull and stedfast practise proceeding from a resolute vow, and as it were a soleme oath taken betwixt God and a mans owne soule, to *keepe the Lords righteous Iudgments* and to *haue respect to all his commandements*. Vse in all things breeds cunning, and he which makes it his care to Put in execution such good duties, as he heares taught, praying the Lord to *establisb him in euery word & good worke*, will in time grow so perfect in good things, that he shall euen with a kind of pleasure, (for the Lords *yoake is easie*) *walke in the law of the Lord* neuer being idle nor vnfruitfull in the knowledge of Christ, but *adorning the doctrine of God our sauour in all things*. The conscionable practise of these duties shall by the blessing of God, reforme our common fault of being strangers in Gods, booke and shall by making Christs word dwell with vs, fit, and make vs ready to dwell with him for euer in his kingdome.

Psal. 119. 106. uer. 6.

2. Thes. 2. 17.
Heb. 13. 21.
Math 11. 30.
Ps 1. 149. 1.
2. Pet. 1. 8.
Tit. 2. 10.

The ende of the third Sermon.

Let God alone haue the glorie.